



**Health Services**  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

June 17, 2013

**Los Angeles County  
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**TO:** Each Supervisor

**FROM:** Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.  
Director

**SUBJECT: HOUSING FOR HEALTH – STAR APARTMENTS AND  
PROJECT UPDATES**

**Mitchell H. Katz, M.D.**  
Director

**Hal F. Yee, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.**  
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Deputy Director, Strategic Planning

The newly created Housing for Health (HFH) division at the Department of Health Services (DHS) is focused on creating housing opportunities for homeless patients and clients of DHS who have complex medical and behavioral health conditions. With outstanding leadership and direction from the Board of Supervisors, DHS is working in collaboration with support services providers, health care providers, housing finance agencies, housing developers, and philanthropy. HFH aims to ultimately facilitate the creation of thousands of housing units linked to the health system. I am pleased to share with you that this new division has already launched a number of projects and is experiencing some exciting successes.

**Star Apartments**

The Star Apartments is an innovative 100 unit housing complex built with modular pre-fabricated units that is being developed by Skid Row Housing Trust. The complex will include over 15,000 square feet of outdoor community space including a track, basketball court, community garden, kitchen, and wellness center. DHS is partnering with Skid Row Housing Trust to provide beautiful housing and on-site support services to 100 DHS patients who have been homeless and frequent users of DHS health care services. On the ground floor of this new building, DHS will operate a primary care clinic at the Star and HFH will also have offices on-site. The Star Apartments is slated for occupancy in late summer 2013.

We were thrilled to recently learn that this project has received the support of two foundations that have done so much to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities in our region. The UniHealth Foundation has granted \$500,000 to assist with the transformation of the ground floor shell into an inviting health care clinic that will serve as a primary care medical home for some of the most vulnerable members of our community and the HFH offices which will act as a supportive housing laboratory for the creation of thousands of units of supportive housing. The Conrad H. Hilton Foundation has granted \$750,000 to the Star Apartments project that will provide critical funding for the interior build out of the community space and furniture for the formerly homeless residents of the Star.

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*To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.*

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### **Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Project**

The NSP project consists of 15 newly renovated properties in South Los Angeles that will provide a total of 56 units of permanent supportive housing to approximately 70 DHS patients who are homeless. NSP is a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that provides funding to purchase and renovate foreclosed or abandoned and vacant properties with the goal of stabilizing and improving neighborhoods. The NSP Project is a collaboration of DHS, the Los Angeles Housing Department (the grantee and administering agency of NSP funds), Restore Neighborhoods LA (a non-profit that acquires and renovates NSP properties), and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) (the provider of Section 8 vouchers for tenants occupying NSP units).

May 2013 was a milestone month for the NSP Project as ownership of 11 of the properties was transferred to West Bay Housing, Inc. who will own and manage the properties and the first tenants moved into their units. This household included 3 men who became friends while recovering from health conditions during their stay at the DHS Recuperative Care Program at Bell Shelter. One man had been homeless for 10 years, another for 5 years, and the third, for 2 years. These gentlemen are now living together in a fully remodeled 3 bedroom unit on a quiet street, supporting one another as they adjust to living in their own house, and receiving great follow up assistance from Housing Works and West Bay. In the coming weeks more DHS patients who are homeless will be moving into their new homes and the remaining four properties will transfer ownership. We have been so fortunate to partner with an amazing intensive case management provider, Housing Works, whose staff have a "whatever it takes" approach to engaging our patients and helping them successfully transition into stable housing. West Bay and Housing Works have shown a deep commitment to serving some of our most vulnerable patients.

The NSP project has also received the support of the Home for Good Funders Collaborative and the Conrad H. Hilton Foundation which have provided funding for furniture, household goods, and other forms of move-in assistance administered by PATH.

### **Park View Place**

Park View Place is a 60 unit new development in the City of San Fernando. The owner/developer for the project is Aszkenazy Development. Twenty of the units are committed to DHS patients who are homeless. The project received HOME capital funding and Project Based Section 8s from the Community Development Commission for the 20 DHS units. The building completed construction in April and DHS tenants began moving into their new homes in May. The intensive case management services provider for the DHS tenants is LA Family Housing (LAFH). LAFH has been a great partner on this project and we are looking forward to partnering on future opportunities.

### **Home for Good – Scattered Site Section 8 Vouchers**

The Home for Good Funders Collaborative has provided amazing support to the scattered site housing programs for chronically homeless DHS and DMH patients and clients. Through this



effort DHS was able to obtain HACLA Section 8 vouchers and move-in assistance for 125 chronically homeless DHS patients. Some of the Section 8 vouchers are being used by tenants in the NSP Project and the rest were committed to the DHS Scattered Site Housing Consortium. The Scattered Site Housing Consortium includes Homeless Health Care Los Angeles, Housing Works, LA Family Housing, Lamp Community, PATH, and the San Gabriel Valley Services Partnership. These partners are all providing chronically homeless DHS patients with housing location services, assistance compiling documents and completing Section 8 applications, and intensive case management services including home visits, linkage to health and behavioral health services, and assistance with benefits establishment. Over sixty of these individuals have already moved into their new homes and the rest will move in over the next few weeks.

This effort is also receiving funding support from the Home for Good Funders Collaborative in the form of move-in assistance administered by PATH. DHS is looking forward to bringing more partners into the Scattered Site Housing Consortium to ensure we are able to locate and provide housing options to homeless residents through the County.

I am most appreciative of the Board of Supervisors' broad vision and support for DHS' new housing initiatives. Housing for Health is not even a year old and hundreds of DHS patients who had been struggling with homelessness and complex medical conditions are moving into new homes. I am moved and inspired by the number and variety of agencies that have come together to make these projects successful. Building on these types of partnerships will greatly expand access to safe and affordable housing for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. My commitment to supportive housing is a key element of DHS' overall strategy to successfully meet the opportunities presented by the Affordable Care Act to ensure that low-income and underrepresented communities receive high quality and comprehensive health care. We will continue to share HFH updates with your offices. Opening celebrations for the projects discussed above will be held during the summer and fall and we will provide you with the details as they become available.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of the projects described above, please let me know.

MHK:jp

c: Chief Executive Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Department of Mental Health